The
COMMONWEAL

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Extreme Extroversion

ON NOVEMBER 25th, the day when the Foreign Ministers of France, England, the USSR and the USA opened their London Council, the New York *Times* and the New York *Herald Tribune* gave a spectacular demonstration of a journalistic and ideological tendency that has been building up all over the country for many years. The front page of the *Herald Tribune* carried four domestic stories and seven foreign. The *Times* front page carried five domestic stories and seven foreign. There was no local, city story at all on either front page, and the state came in only through a plea by the Governor for material aid to China—a foreign or international subject.

It would appear that the papers could hardly do better for "internationalists" as opposed to "isolationists." The opinion that recognizes the interdependence of world welfare and obligations, and most highly estimates the impact of foreign affairs on American living appears to be well served.

Examination of the domestic stories on the front pages of these two leading newspapers shows the case is still stranger than the 14 to 9 summary implies. The Meyers story arose directly from the international war efforts. The Hollywood Congressional contempt case reflects the effort of Representative Thomas and colleagues to meet in their way the threat of international communism. Senator Taft's assault on "planned economy" and Senator Bridge's warning about meager rationing are integral to the debates over foreign assistance. Inflation, which is doubtless largely a war legacy, is behind the federal warning to the banks against loose lending, and it is at least one-half behind the Chicago printers' strike—the single predominantly domestic story on these two front pages.

If these journalistic examples correctly reflect a deeply serious concern and sense of responsibility of the community for intelligent and just work toward world peace and worldwide restoration, then they should be loudly applauded. If these great papers, by this remarkable concentration on foreign and international problems, are educating their hosts of readers to a more universal vision and to responsible thought and activity in the very broad areas they write about, they surely earn nothing but fervent congratulations. And it is, we feel optimistically persuaded, in some large measure that way.

But not altogether. Such extreme extroversion must be suspected of excessiveness. We cannot help feeling the weight of a whole school of arguments in the other direction. They should be at least cited to get a balance. The normal and proper order of duty and effort and even charity is from the fireside out—to town and county and region and state and country and civilization and world. These enormous problems of the world are, for too many of us, in practical fact, abstractions. We feel largely, and largely are, impotent before them. They can be a diversion turning us from matters literally and figuratively closer to home, problems about which we have more knowledge, more experience and greater possibility of doing something. Why worry about the housing situation in your precinct when you can be lost in the atomic threat to the North Pole? Why take local traffic seriously when we can speculate on the logistics of world conflicts? Distant, abstract, speculative problems develop partisanship and focus attention to areas where we are ineffective and hinder us from doing what we really can do in our local areas of greatest competence. And, indeed, almost everyone agrees that the soundest, longer view solution of those planetary conflicts themselves can be reached by "making things work better here." That may in part be a lazy and selfish slogan, tendentiously propagandistic and stupidly impossible. But not altogether. There ought to be *one* local item on the front page of even the grandest newspaper.

Shipments to Russia

IN HIS argument with Mr. Truman on the specific point about continuing to ship machinery to Soviet Russia, Mr. Stassen has all the

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logic on his side. Of course, if we were all in the effort to effect European restoration together, there would be some force to the President's contention that the industrial rehabilitation of Russia is to America's and the general interest. But obviously the USA and the USSR are working at cross purposes in Europe and elsewhere. As the Republican aspirant points out, even the output of the Skoda works and other heavy industry in satellite Czechoslovakia are now routed East despite the needs of Western Europe. The overwhelming possibility that American equipment may be used to further production of atomic weapons by a consistently hostile Soviet Union should certainly give us pause.

An examination of the hundred and fourteen million dollars worth of American material exported to Russia the first nine months of this year has a decided bearing on this point. It includes equipment for hydro-electric power installations, freight cars, steam locomotives and all sorts of industrial machinery. In fact, machinery and vehicles account for more than two-thirds of this sum. Meanwhile Britain, as part of her drive for vital exports, has machinery tagged for the USSR crated and awaiting the successful conclusion of new Anglo-Russian trade talks. The British *matériel* is naturally on a smaller scale, but it includes miles of narrow-gauge track, scores of small diesel engines, freight cars, boring and drilling machines and other mining and electricity-generating equipment. If we recognize the one solid factor in the prospect of avoiding war in the immediate future, what possible justification can there be for actually helping the USSR overcome her industrial backwardness? It would seem a more heinous procedure than shipping scrap iron to an obviously militaristic Japan a few years back. Contributing to Russian heavy industry simply does not make sense under its present governing clique.

Unless international affairs should suddenly register a fully convincing reversal, the United States should not only suspend all shipments of industrial wherewithal to the Soviet Union and satellites, but might also see what can be done about the disposition of potential British imports to Russia. Could not the English be persuaded to switch the labels on their waiting crates to, say, Latin American destinations, if the United States would undertake to do something in the matter of credits? Why hasten the still distant day when Stalin or his successors will have the industrial and military aggregate to force a showdown on an inter-continental scale!

An embargo such as this is anything but welcome. The restrictions involved may cause grave domestic difficulties; and it might well raise tension with Russia to a new pitch. But is there an arguable alternative? Since the United States is in the driver's seat here, we must in self-defense, and in the common interest, make the most of our position. Trade with Russia should be strictly *quid pro quo,* with American shipments of even non-arming and non-industrializing commodities contingent upon actual Russian shipments of grain and other things vitally needed by participants in the Marshall Plan.

According to a sound American prospect, a well-industrialized USSR is acceptable only along with a restored Western Europe, a strong United Nations (with adequate inspection and the power to enforce its decisions) and a Russia actually cooperating in the rehabilitation and mutual prosperity of the nations of the world. Therefore a restrictive United States policy on exports to Russia would be adopted only as a temporary move. It could be devised so that it might be relaxed periodically at certain points and to the degree the situation warranted.

Such a policy would encounter all sorts of opposition. Manufacturers and exporters, citizens temperamentally and otherwise opposed to overt acts of power politics, those who are painfully conscious of injustices and other defects of our own American system and (it goes without saying) all conscious and unconscious fellow-travelers. But this is one phase in the larger situation where the thing for the United States to do is unmistakable.

Admitting Displaced Persons

THE likelihood that early next year Congress may enact the permissive legislation to admit an appreciable but strictly limited number of DP's into this country is now acknowledged by many national observers. Organized opposition has greatly subsided, visiting Congressmen have changed their opinions on the basis of actual contacts and a dim realization is growing that relieving population pressure is one of the essentials to European restoration. It is heartening to note that preparation for this step extends beyond the halls of Congress. In Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and the Dakotas state authorities are collaborating with religious groups in drawing up resettlement plans for thousands of new Americans. This has also been one of the latest activities of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, which derives much of its strength from the states named above. It is one of the several scores on which Pope Pius XII warmly congratulated the Conference at its annual meeting at Lafayette, La., November 22 to 26. It comprises a two-fold task. First to give Europeans a better chance to make a go of things at home by lightening the burden constituted by their communities of displaced refugees from totalitarianism. Second, to settle these immigrants in such circumstances that they may fruitfully apply their undoubted talents to making a solid place for themselves and their families in the New World.

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"The Third Force"

LEON BLUM said what there was to be said as courageously and as clearly as ever. There was a force to the Left, directed by the Communists, and another force to the Right, dominated by de Gaulle, he said, and there was a Third Force which should be dominated by no one party or no one man because it was the Republican and democratic force of a nation that refused totalitarian or authoritarian forms and desired to govern itself with the usual debates, the usual compromises, and with the slow processes (the wastage, the confusion) of democracy. Blum asked the Chamber of Deputies to sanction a government which should implement this Third Force. By a bare majority the Chamber refused. (The Communists and the Gaullists were those who decided.)

Then Robert Schuman formed a government with the Communists opposing him and all but a few Gaullists supporting him. This Schuman is an Alsatian who possesses the confidence of business elements; he is a financier, that is to say a man who would like to balance the budget, and a bureaucrat. Incidentally he is not (as the New York *Times* assumed in a hasty editorial on Sunday, November 23) his London homonym, the "close associate of de Gaulle," and "prominent in the Resistance." Schuman is in power because the French failed to put the Third Force into action. He is where he is, not as a force but as a compromise; he is not there to lead the center; he is there edging over to the right. He is not de Gaulle's man; but he is a man who cannot remain in power for a day longer than de Gaulle tolerates. The present French Government represents the classical type of loose coalition which has taken the fatal step of accepting power from one extreme party or another (it could have been from the communists; in this case it is from de Gaulle) and consequently depends for its existence on the good will of that party. The classical type of transition government, it is a government "on call." And there is no doubt as to who can step up to the cashier's cage whenever he wants to.

Meanwhile the Schuman government faces intense labor troubles and strikes, which means that it faces whatever situation the communists desire to present it with—up to a general strike, total disorder, up to and including civil war. But before civil war, de Gaulle will have taken over.

It is not for us to know what may be the communist plan or if communist leaders can prevail upon their French adherents to ruin the country. In any case they are playing with fire; they are calling for de Gaulle, riots, misery and repression. If they want it black and white, the First force against the Second, they can have it that way—most unfortunately—at any time.

The Third Force, politically has failed; Blum has failed. And so now is the time to say, no matter what happens, that nothing but the Third Force is France.

The Third Force is this. The mist lies low in the valley and the road between the poplar trees is heavy with mud. Wearing black smocks and wooden shoes, the children have their satchel over their shoulders; the girl of seven holds her little brother's hand and they are going to school. In the village it's like in the picture books. "The man is repairing the bicycle; the baker is taking the loaf from the oven, the postman carries the mail, have you a letter for me, I write once a week to my sister, the farmer has cows, goats, sheep, ducks, the dog is the farmer's friend, he keeps the cows and the sheep from straying into the woods but, look, he barks at the ducks, the ducks are frightened."

The Third Force is this. Péguy is in the composing room setting type for his *Mystère de la Charité*—and then they all come in and the argument is about socialism and Dreyfus. At the Sorbonne, Bergson is lecturing and the Maritains are listening to him. The newspapers of the Right are cursing the newspapers of the Left.

The Third Force is made up of the people of France, the peasants, workmen, intellectuals. Its strength is in the atheist schoolteacher, and in the young Catholic who has taken a job in the Catholic school; in the intellectual who is in politics—the royalist students fighting Republican students—and in the intellectual who will have nothing to do with politics. The Third Force is nourished by the man who writes privately printed regional poetry in Provençal, and it draws strength from the poet who has given up poetry for political action. The Third Force exists through diversity, freedom in conflict, the living mind, courage of heart. That has been the climate of Republican France.

It is only regimentation that can hurt the Third Force and that is why it is menaced now. It is life itself that is menaced. But that is why one may still hope in France. Because France does not seem ever to have had a will to accept death. That is why one may hope—why it is impossible not to hope—in the five million French who have voted communist. It is not likely that they can accept regimentation for long. And it is that way with the members of the one great union (the CGT); obedience to a party line is not their habit. France is not like Germany. And that also is why the assumption of power by de Gaulle—if the communists insist on having a showdown—presents a lesser risk than such personal leadership would present elsewhere. No one can bind the Third Force, that great force, which is France, for long.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Active and Contemplative Orders

Thomas Merton

THERE ARE paradoxes in the history of Christian spirituality and not the least of them is the apparent contradiction in the way the Fathers and modern Popes have regarded the relation between the active and contemplative lives. Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory lamented the "sterility" of contemplation, which was in itself, as they admitted, superior to action. Yet Pope Pius XI came out in the constitution "Umbratilem" with the clear statement that the contemplative life was *much more* fruitful for the Church (*multo plus ad Ecclesiae incrementa et humani generis salutem conferre . . .*) than the activity of teaching and preaching. What is all the more surprising to a superficial observer is the fact that such a pronouncement should belong to our energetic times. You would have sooner attributed the thought to Saint Augustine and left Pius XI to worry about *"Rachel pulchra et infecunda"* the symbol of the fruitless contemplative vocation. Of course the Holy Father's purpose is quite evident once you note that he refers to Leo XIII's letter *"Testem benevolentiae"* as a prelude to his pronouncement. That letter, you remember, was addressed to Cardinal Gibbons, and some people are still touchy about the whole affair.

There is no need to be touchy about it. No such letter would be addressed, even by mistake, to us today. America is discovering the contemplative life. The discovery is slow in coming, perhaps. Our publishers are still very timid about putting out books that go very far into the interior life, but if they want to find out how misplaced are their fears let them consider the interest non-Catholics are showing in Saint John of the Cross (about whom there was recently an article in *Horizon*—a London magazine with intellectual pretensions) or let them remember that monasteries and booksellers who have been forced, by the demand, to reprint spiritual classics on their own initiative, have not suffered from it. The Trappists at Gethsemani, Kentucky, have had no trouble disposing of nearly ten thousand copies of a new translation of the "Soul of the Apostolate" in one year *without advertising,* and without the assistance of a corps of salesmen.

Then of course there is the increase of contemplative vocations.

All this invites us to reconsider a question that is by no means new, although perhaps it needs to be looked at in a new light. The argument "action vs. contemplation" goes back to the earliest days of the Church and it is not something that is so speculative that it has not many practical consequences that are vitally important to everyone.

Saint Thomas gave a classical summary of the whole thing in the *Summa Theologica.* But the trouble is, he gave us *two* classical summaries. And on the surface it is rather hard to reconcile them. They are both in the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa.* The substance of Question 188, article 6, has become quite familiar, at least in a garbled form. Practically anyone who realizes the existence of the debate can tell you that Saint Thomas taught that there were three vocations: that to the active life, that to the contemplative, and a third to the mixture of both, and that this last is superior to the other two. The mixed life is, of course, the vocation of Saint Thomas's own order, the Friars Preachers.

Not so many will be able to confuse you by contrasting this question with one which comes just a little ahead of it—one hundred and eighty-two. There Saint Thomas comes out flatly with a pronouncement no less uncompromising than the one we read from "Umbratilem." *Vita contemplativa,* he remarks, *simpliciter est melior quam activa* the contemplative life in itself, by its very nature, is superior to the active life. What is more, he proves it by natural reason in arguments from a pagan philosopher—Aristotle. That is how esoteric the question is! Later on he gives his strongest argument in distinctly Christian terms. The contemplative life directly and immediately occupies itself with the love of God, than which there is no act more perfect or more meritorious. Indeed that love is the root of all merit. When you consider the effect of individual merit upon the vitality of other members of the Mystical Body it is evident that there is nothing sterile about contemplation. On the contrary Saint Thomas's treatment of it in this question shows that the contemplative life establishes a man in the very heart of all spiritual fecundity.

When he admits that the active life *can* be more perfect under certain circumstances, accidentally, he hedges his statement in with half a dozen qualifications of a strictness that greatly enhances what he has already said about contemplation. First, activity will only be more perfect than the joy and rest of contemplation if it is undertaken as the result of an overflow of love

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for God (*propter abundantiam divini amoris*) in order to fulfil His will. It is not to be continuous, only the answer to a temporary emergency. It is purely for God's glory, and it does not dispense us from contemplation. It is an added obligation, and we must return as soon as we morally can to the powerful and fruitful silence of recollection that disposes our souls for divine union.

When you see all this lined up in front of you, you turn back to Question one eighty-eight and readjust your spectacles. How can the two questions be made to fit together?

The only way to see clearly through the apparent contradiction is to weigh the words of the famous distinction of the three kinds of religious vocations by the balance of traditional teaching as well as Saint Thomas's own doctrine as we have just expressed it.

In Saint Thomas's time the "active life" had not quite crystallized out into its modern meaning. Today the "active life" means technically a vocation to some external works of charity or mercy for the good of others. But the Fathers are apt to make use of it as meaning the activity required for the practice of any virtue and anyone who is in the purgative or illuminative ways will then be leading an active life even though he were to be cloistered or lost in the depths of the desert. Ordinarily, of course, works of mercy would be included among such acts of virtue. Saint Thomas uses the term in both these different senses without giving any warning when he is about to make the change. Now when he speaks of the three kinds of vocation he clearly means the active life in the modern sense—a vocation to the service of other people. But nevertheless his threefold division presupposes a hidden use of the ancient meaning. When he ranks the three vocations in their order of dignity with the teaching Orders at the top, the contemplative Orders in the middle and the purely active Orders at the bottom of the scale he was obviously thinking of the traditional conception of the degrees of perfection that you will find so explicitly in Saint Augustine or Saint Bernard: first comes the active life (practice of virtues, mortification, charity) which prepares us for contemplation. Contemplation means rest, suspension of activity, withdrawal into the mysterious interior solitude in which the soul is absorbed in the immense and fruitful silence of God and learns something of the secret of His perfections less by seeing than by fruitive love.

Yet to stop here would be to fall short of perfection. According to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux it is the comparatively weak soul that arrives at contemplation but does not overflow with a love that must communicate what it knows of God to other men. (Serm. 90 de Diversis.) For all the great Christian mystics without exception, Saint Bernard, Saint Gregory, Saint Theresa, Saint John of the Cross, Blessed John Ruysbroeck, Saint Bonaventure, the peak of the mystical life is a marriage of the soul with God which gives the saints a miraculous power, a smooth and tireless energy in working for God and for souls which bears fruits in the sanctity of thousands and changes the course of religious and even secular history.

With this in mind, Saint Thomas could not fail to give the highest place to a vocation which, in his eyes, seemed destined to lead men to such a height of contemplation that the soul must overflow and communicate its secrets to the world.

Unfortunately all this is by no means obvious in the text of that particular article (Q. 188, A. 6). In fact, taken by itself, the bare statement "the religious institutes which are ordered to the work of preaching and teaching hold the highest rank in religion" is, frankly, misleading. It conjures up nothing more than a mental image of some pious and industrious clerics bustling from the library to the classroom. If it meant no more than this the solution would be hardly comprehensible to a Christian. Yet the tragedy is that many — including members of those "mixed" Orders—cannot find in it any deeper significance. If you can give a half-way intelligent lecture applying some thoughts from scholastic philosophy to the social situation, that alone places you very near the summit of perfection. . . .

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No, we must turn back the pages to those flaming words which lay down the conditions under which it is valid to leave contemplation for action. First of all *propter abundantiam divini amoris*. The life of these mixed Orders is to be rated above that of the pure contemplatives only on the supposition that their love is *so much more vehement, so much more abundant* that it has to pour itself out in teaching and preaching.

In other words Saint Thomas is here teaching us that the so-called mixed vocation can only be superior to the contemplative vocation if it is itself *more contemplative*. This conclusion is inescapable. It imposes a tremendous obligation. Saint Thomas is really saying that the Dominican, the Franciscan, the Carmelite must be supercontemplatives. Either that or he is contradicting everything he said about the superiority of the contemplative life in Question one eighty-two.

Therefore it will readily be seen that the serene sentence of the Angelic Doctor that "it is better to pass on to others the fruits of contemplation (*contemplata aliis tradere*) than merely to contemplate and nothing else" has a very serious catch to it. The Orders that are dedicated to the teaching vocation must necessarily build their

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houses in or near towns and live in contact with the busy and violent—and vicious world. Yet they have this obligation to be so filled with the infused wisdom that teaches us the secrets of Divine Love in contemplation that they will overflow and teach that love to the world. But the indispensable condition for the contemplative life is at least some measure of silence and solitude and withdrawal from the world.

The so-called "mixed" Orders have always realized this and the Carmelites, for instance, have never considered a province complete unless it included several "deserts"—monasteries hidden in the mountains where the Fathers could retire to hermitages and live alone with God. After all, how can one fulfil a vocation to pass on the fruits of contemplation to others if he himself has no contemplation and no fruits?

Whether the "mixed" Orders today in America are actually as contemplative as this program would demand is a question the author of this article has no way of answering. But at any rate it seems that most of them have reached, in practice, a sort of compromise to get out of the difficulty. They divide up their duties between their nuns and their priests. The nuns live in cloisters and do the contemplating and the priests live in colleges and cities and do the teaching and preaching. In the light of *"Umbratilem"* and the doctrine of the Mystical Body this solution is at least possible, if conditions leave them with no other way out. Saint Thomas, however, envisaged a program that was far more complete and satisfactory, for the individual and for the Church!

But what about the contemplative Orders? Their rules and usages at least grant them all they need to dispose themselves for contemplation and if their members do not reach it, it is at least not because of any difficulty inherent in their actual way of life. Granting that they are, or can be, as contemplative as they were meant to be by their founders: are they anything else?

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The fact is, there does not exist any such thing as a purely contemplative Order of men—an Order which does not have, somewhere in its constitution, the note of *contemplata tradere*. The Carthusians, with all their elaborate efforts to preserve the silence and solitude of the hermit's life in their monasteries, definitely wrote into their original "Customs" the characteristic labor of copying manuscripts and writing books in order that they might preach to the world by their pen even though their tongues were silent.

The Cistercians had no such legislation, and they even enacted statutes to limit the production of books and to forbid poetry altogether. Nevertheless they produced a school of mystical theologians which, as Dom Berlière says, represents the finest flower of Benedictine spirituality. We have seen what Saint Bernard, the head of that school, had to say on the subject, and in any case even if the Cistercians never wrote anything to pass on the fruit of their contemplation to the Church at large, *contemplata tradere* would always be an essential element in Cistercian life to the extent that the abbot and those charged with the direction of souls would always be obliged to feed the rest of the monks with the good bread of mystical theology as it came forth in smoking hot loaves from the oven of contemplation. This was what Saint Bernard told the learned cleric of York, Henry Murdach, to lure him from his books into the woods where the beeches and elms had taught the Abbot of Clairvaux all his wisdom.

And these "purely active" Orders, what about them? Do any such things exist? The Little Sisters of the Poor, the nursing sisterhoods cannot truly fulfil their vocations unless there is something of that *contemplata tradere,* the sharing of the fruits of contemplation. Even the active vocation is sterile without an interior life, and, indeed, a deep interior life.

The truth is, in any kind of a religious Order there is not only the possibility but even in some sense the obligation of leading, at least to some extent, the highest of all lives—contemplation, and the sharing of its fruits with others. Saint Thomas's principle stands firm: the greatest perfection is *contemplata tradere.* But that does not oblige us to restrict this vocation, as he does, to the teaching Orders. They only happen to be the ones that seem to be best equipped to pass on the knowledge of God acquired by loving Him—if they have acquired that knowledge in contemplation. Yet others may perhaps be better placed for acquiring it.

In any case, there are many different ways of sharing the fruits of contemplation with others. You don't have to write books or make speeches. You don't have to have direct contact with souls in the confessional. Prayer can do the work wonderfully well, and indeed the fire of contemplation has a tendency to spread of itself throughout the Church and vivify all the members of Christ in secret without any conscious act on the part of the contemplative. But if you argue that Saint Thomas's context limits us at least to some sort of visible and natural communication with our fellow men (though it is hard to see why this should be so) nevertheless even in that event there exists a far more powerful means of sharing the mystical and experimental knowledge of God.

If we turn to the pages of Saint Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* we will find what is perhaps the best description ever written of this highest of all vocations. It is a description which the Seraphic

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Doctor himself learned on retreat and in solitude on Mount Alvernia. Praying in the same lonely spot where the great founder of his Order, Saint Francis of Assisi, had had the wounds of Christ burned into his hands and feet and side, Saint Bonaventure saw, by the light of a supernatural intuition, the full meaning of this tremendous event in the history of the Church. "There," he says, "Saint Francis 'passed over into God' (*in Deum transiit*) in the ecstacy (*excessus*) of contemplation and thus he was set up as an example of perfect contemplation just as he had previously been an example of perfection in the active life in order that God, through him, might draw all truly spiritual men to this kind of 'passing over' (*transitus*) and ecstasy, *less by word than by example.*" (Itin, vii. 3.)

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Here is the clear and true meaning of *contemplata tradere,* expressed without equivocation by one who had lived that life to the full. It is the vocation to transforming union, to the very height of the mystical life and of mystical experience, to the very transformation into Christ that Christ living in us and directing all our actions might Himself draw men to desire and seek that same exalted union because of the joy and the sanctity and the supernatural vitality radiated by our example—or rather because of the secret influence of Christ living within us in complete possession of our souls.

And notice the tremendously significant fact that the Seraphic Doctor makes no divisions and distinctions: Christ imprinted His own image upon Saint Francis in order to draw not some men, not a few privileged souls, but *all* truly spiritual men to the perfection of contemplation which is nothing else but the perfection of love. Once they have reached these heights they will draw others to them in their turn. Thus all men are called to become fused into one spirit with Christ in the furnace of contemplation and then go forth and cast upon the earth that same fire which Christ wills to see enkindled.

This means, in practice, that there is only one vocation. Whether you teach or live in the cloister or nurse the sick, whether you are in religion or out of it, no matter who you are or what you are, you are called to the summit of perfection: you are called to be a contemplative and to pass the fruits of your contemplation on to others. And if you cannot do so by word, then by example.

Yet if this sublime fire of infused love burns in your soul, it will inevitably send forth throughout the Church and the world an influence more tremendous than could be estimated by the radius reached by words or by example. Saint John of the Cross writes: "A very little of this pure love

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is more precious in the sight of God and of *greater profit to the Church,* even though the soul appear to be doing nothing, than are all other works put together." (Spiritual Canticle, b, xxix, 2.)

There are degrees and varieties in this perfection to which you are called, but these degrees do not depend on the means you have at your disposal for preaching divine union. On the contrary they are measured by the perfection of that union itself. You will most perfectly fulfil this great vocation not by being a great teacher or a great scholar but by being a great saint, and sanctity means perfect love of God. The teaching, the exterior works are only accidental. To make them the principal thing is to doom yourself to failure because that will lead you in the wrong direction: it will make you aim at the riches of knowledge rather than the spiritual poverty of the contemplative which is the indispensable prerequisite for acquiring the wisdom that is born of Christ's love.

The Stage & Screen

Eastward in Eden

I SUPPOSE one should admit the possibility of a play based on such a life as Emily Dickinson's. One ought to be able to contemplate a play about anything. However, I'm afraid Dorothy Gardner's piece is no more felicitous than have been other efforts in the same direction, and considerably less so, I judge, than Susan Glaspell's "Alison's House" produced years ago by the Civic Repertory. Miss Glaspell's play, it is true, was weighted entirely differently, but at least it took its spring from the passionate privacy of its subject. Mrs. Gardner's does not. Here we have Emily plain (and fancy), talking in poems, and altogether of a winsomeness as intense as Peter Pan's. "Oh, for a week of Medea!" is a not unjust conclusion.

The author's problem was, of course, the inflation of such slivers of her heroine's history as are known, together with the inflation of her apocryphal attachment to the minister, Charles Wadsworth. But the trouble is that any drama formed of such static, really secret, material is bound to come off as a play crammed full of gesture and *business* rather than action. There seem to be plenty of odds and ends in all corners of the stage for the cast to fiddle over, but no one is honestly engaged in anything and it seems quite difficult for Mrs. Gardner to get any of her characters either on or off the stage, for any clear reason. Again, I must repeat that the essential percepts of nature and death contained in the poems are surely written stuff: to be read. Somehow or other, while it is not disconcerting to imagine a sensitive girl saying "tell me of immortality" to a minister of God, actually to hear her making such a statement is abysmal. Indeed, I don't know for how long in the future a num-

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ber of the crystal stanzas are going to unnerve the evening's audience. This will seem, in a way, a criticism of the playing, which is emphatically not the case. I thought Beatrice Straight's work in the lead far more subtle and sure than the lines signified. To achieve any lightness or simplicity in such a driven rôle would seem to me to be a triumph. And Onslow Stevens's Wadsworth was as nicely balanced. During the middle act a descending scrim indicated an ensuing dream, a sequence which I do not feel capable of describing. However, I do hope this device is not going to become a convention. It seems a cheap escape for any serious dramatist and awfully close to the chiffon arrangements of Hollywood where actors are so often forced to be constantly ascending into heaven, or just into "the middle of the air." (*at the Royale*)

The Ballet Theatre, Inc.

THE STANDARD of performance and production at the City Center having reached a peak with the recent enchanting "Don Giovanni," it is nice to think this notable young dance-company is to be housed there until mid-December. I hope to be able to cover one of their premières next week. In the meantime, the reports are certainly stimulating enough to warrant the least expensive and most popular tickets in town. (*at the City Center*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Sound and Fury

WHAT WITH the sudden rush of recent releases, I seem to have got behind in my reviews; so, in order to keep up with a fast-moving Hollywood world, I am writing this week a series of notes about new or fairly new films—films that have little in common except their varied expressions of violence.

"Heaven Only Knows" is almost a western; it has the main ingredients: tough guys, shooting and a lawless town in Montana Territory. But this film is also a fantasy; it opens with a scene showing the Upper Regions in a turmoil because one man on Earth was never entered in the Book of Life. And furthermore this man (Brian Donlevy), according to the Book of Destiny, was supposed to have been an upright pillar of society—and there he is, down in Montana, a bad man! So Michael (Robert Cummings) goes down to earth to set things straight. Some of the comedy that follows is rather amusing, particularly when Mike is mistaken for the Kansas City Kid; but unfortunately the story bogs down in a cynical kind of sentimentality and wears itself out. Marjorie Reynolds and Jorja Curtright are the girls involved. At least the first half of the picture provides enough fun and excitement to hold your interest.

"Wild Harvest" is almost a western, too; however, its rough and tough boys (Alan Ladd, Robert Preston, Lloyd Nolan, Allen Jenkins, etc.) ride combines instead of horses, as they move from state to state harvesting wheat. They get into some awfully gory scrapes, most of which are their own fault, for drinking and fighting are more important to them than wheat. And a strange code of ethics dominates their business deal in which the hard-working farmer somehow becomes the goat. Dorothy

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Lamour tries to upset the solid comraderie that prevails in this intensely masculine group. Her efforts and the men's attitude of stick-together-no-matter-how-honest-citizens-may-suffer are finally carried to the point of absurdity.

"The Upturned Glass," an English thriller that isn't likely to win James Mason any new fans, is peculiarly divided into two parts. In the first, the sultry-handsome star, portraying a brain surgeon, lectures his class on the sane criminal and outlines his plan (which is visualized) to kill a woman; in the second, he commits the murder, and then, realizing he is a paranoic, jumps off the cliff. Pamela Kellino and Rosemund John assist Mason in this contrived foolishness that becomes much-ado-about-nothing. Furthermore neither the acting nor the direction help very much. There is, however, one scene, which, although it has little to do with the plot, steals the show. It is a travesty on a modern cocktail party and its satire is as biting as the similar scene in "Allegro."

Director Richard Whorf is mainly responsible for the ineffectualness of *"Love from a Stranger,"* a thriller based on a story by Agatha Christie. Even though the plot (about a woman of means who marries a Bluebeard and discovers her mistake as she is about to go the way of his former wives) is dated, it could have been built up with cinematic suspense as was "Gaslight." But Director Whorf doesn't use movie technique well, and the result is colorless and talky. Sylvia Sidney, as the rather naïve woman, and John Hodiak, baring his fangs too often as her criminal husband, try hard enough, but little comes of their efforts.

No matter how much you may object to the clichés in the plot of *"Body and Soul,"* you'll have to admit that Producer Bob Roberts and Director Robert Rossen know how to make a movie move. There's nary a dull scene on the screen as we watch this prizefighter who rides the merry-go-round from poverty to riches. And John Garfield gives one of the best performances of his career as the half-heel-half-hero who takes the ride. Strong in characterization and action, "Body and Soul" has an excellent cast throughout; Lilli Palmer, Anne Revere, Joseph Pevney, Canada Lee and others portray the people who surround this "champ" whose ambition is money regardless of method. James Wong Howe's photography is firstrate.

"The Unfinished Dance" is a Hollywood version of the French picture called "Ballerina." Unfortunately it was so watered and technicolored while being remade that the resemblance is slight. While Margaret O'Brien *could* handle this rôle (a young ballet student responsible for the dreadful accident that ends the dancing career of a *première danseuse*) she isn't given a real opportunity to do her best acting. Margaret works on the rôle and she is given fine support by Cyd Charisse and Karin Booth as the two leading dancers, but the ballet atmosphere in this movie is no more like the real thing than are the admirable and well-trained Rockettes. Producer Joe Pasternak and Director Henry Koster wanted to play their Margaret both ways; they were afraid to let her be a hellion without the sugared cute tricks.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

The Times of Melville and Whitman. Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton. $5.00.

NO ONE is more responsible for the recent general awareness of our national literary heritage than Van Wyck Brooks. True to his lifelong effort to provide a usable American past, for at least a dozen years he has devoted his great talents to recreating our literary history and conveying his enthusiasm for it to a host of readers. In a peculiarly pictorial-minded period, many are content with Mr. Brooks's richly colored and lovingly detailed pictures of authors who are only names to the semi-literate mass, and of other writers whose very names have been forgotten by all except specialists in American literature. But those who disparage Mr. Brooks as a mere dealer in anecdotes and the picturesque need to be reminded that he has the rare talent of evoking intellectual curiosity, and that he has stimulated many real readers to make their own discoveries of the American past. His work and that derived from it have broadened our understanding of the American spirit.

With this volume Mr. Brooks fills in a sizable panel in his picture of the literary life in America. This is the third in chronological order, although the fourth to be published. Its place in the series lies between *The Flowering of New England* and *New England: Indian Summer*: it is concerned with the literary history of the regions outside New England from 1845 to 1885. (The next volume is to cover the same field from 1885 to 1914). Mark Twain figures as prominently in this book as Melville and Whitman, and the "times" with which it is concerned were perhaps much more his than those of Melville and Whitman. For the rest, Mr. Brooks here deals with figures as familiar as Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Bayard Taylor, Sidney Lanier, Joel Chandler Harris, John Muir, and John Burroughs; and as unfamiliar as Charles Godfrey Leland, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Charles Warren Stoddard, and a host of other minor writers. The structure of the book is musical, if the method is pictorial: it opens with five introductory chapters on the chief regions covered (New York, Philadelphia, the South, the Middle West, and the Far West); then pursues a fugue-like treatment of the chief themes and many minor ones; and closes with a new development of the introductory material and with a transitional section leading to the next volume.

In his treatment of Whitman and Mark Twain Mr. Brooks is at his best, and his best is very good indeed. Indeed his virtues have become so familiar that criticism is reduced, in order to avoid banal repetition, to pointing out where he has not been wholly successful. As has been suggested in connection with the title, this book lacks the natural unity of Mr. Brooks's earlier work on the New England writers. In the period with which he is here concerned there is no such focal point as the Concord school, and the book suffers in readability from the author's attempt to cover comprehensively an almost unmanageable amount of material. The disadvantages of Mr. Brooks's method become apparent when it is applied to the whole country and a collection of writers who had little in common except that they were Americans living in the same span of years. The different sections of the country were in very different stages of

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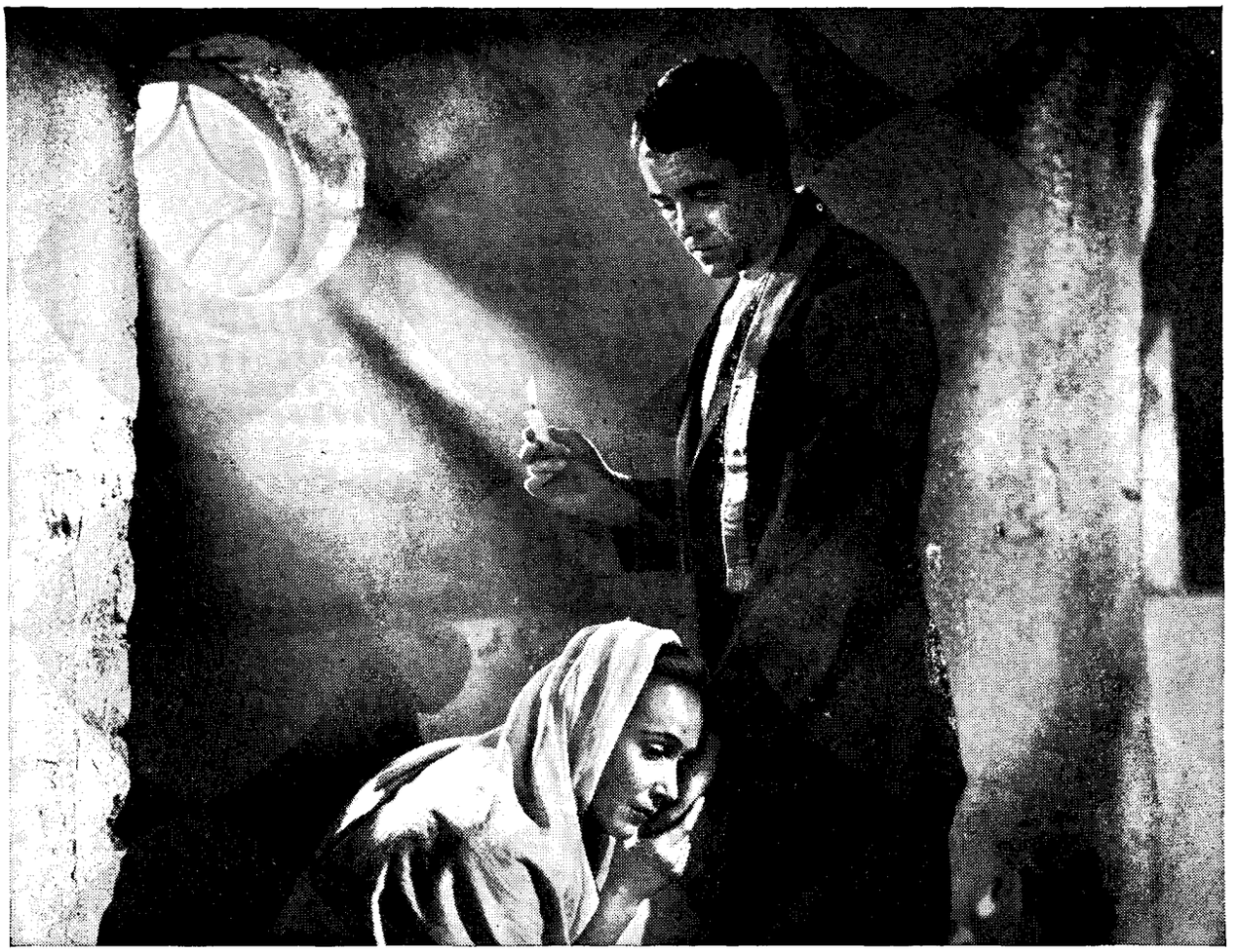

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Because JOHN FORD is a realist as well as an artist, perhaps no other director could have brought "THE FUGITIVE" to the screen with such believable dramatic emotion. Three-time winner of the Academy Award, JOHN FORD will be remembered for these pictures of comparable greatness: "The Informer," "The Hurricane," "Stagecoach," "Grapes of Wrath," "The Long Voyage Home," "How Green Was My Valley," "They Were Expendable."

"THE FUGITIVE" stars Henry Fonda, Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendariz with J. Carrol Naish, Leo Carrillo, Robert Armstrong, John Qualen and Ward Bond. Dudley Nichols wrote the screenplay. The musical score and musical direction were in the hands of Richard Hageman.

"THE FUGITIVE" was made entirely in Mexico at the kind invitation of the Mexican Government and of the Mexican motion picture industry. Director Ford was assisted by the brilliant work of Associate Producer, Emilio Fernandez, and Cinematographer, Gabriel Figueroa, twice winner of the Cannes International Award for "Best Photography." JOHN FORD and MERIAN C. COOPER present their first Argosy Pictures Production through RKO Radio Pictures.

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literary development, ranging from the romantic decadence of the old South to the rude journalistic culture of the young West. More historical background would be helpful in explaining how Melville retired into self-exile from "membership in the mart" of the new industrial East; how Whitman sprawled and slid into bathos in attempting to comprehend a swelling North America; and how West and East fought within Mark Twain. An almost purely literary approach to what are often essentially non-literary materials distorts the picture. Though Mr. Brooks has clearly immersed himself in the various regional cultures with which he is here concerned, he gives the impression of being less at home than on New England ground. It is difficult to be universal on so personal and allusive a plane as that on which Mr. Brooks prefers to work, and one is conscious that he is an Easterner looking at the West and a Northerner looking at the South.

These criticisms are not to be taken as belittling Mr. Brooks's very great achievement in bringing alive the background against which his central figures, much studied individually, moved and worked. No other historian of American letters has succeeded so brilliantly in giving us the complete picture of a literary period, and it is very much to be hoped that Mr. Brooks will be able to bring to a conclusion the vast task which he has thus far so ably executed. MASON WADE.

Strange Life of Ivan Osokin. P. D. Ouspensky. Holme Press. $2.75.

THE first publication of the Holme Press is a pemmican novel, economical, dry, bare and exciting. For it is both about someone, and about something. Ivan Osokin is a completely plausible, rather engaging simpleton, lively and likable. And the novel postulates the terrifying possibility of recurrence, that is that everything is all to do again, and that, occasionally, one can become aware, even if only momentarily, of this fact, and of the process.

The novel is written as though a synopsis for the screen, and yet it is in no way tabloid or condensed. It is as if it were a new form, a novel for 1947: experiment today, but one which, half a century hence, will be the accepted form. In the first scene, Ivan Osokin is shown as a young man in a group of friends seeing Zinaida Krutitsky and her mother off to the Crimea. Osokin is in love with Zinaida: she wants him to give up his teaching job and come with her. He is too poor. "I have thirty kopecks in my pocket. Yet," he reflects, "if she realized this it would make it no easier for me." As he looks around, after leaving her, it seems "there are times when I remember something and others when it seems that I've forgotten something very important. I feel as though all this had happened before, in the past". We all have such moments; Professor J. B. Rhine says we have dreamed them forward.

Three months later Osokin has had three letters from Zinaida; he, for his part, has written to her every day. Now he learns that Zinaida is going to be married to a famous general. Taking a pistol from his table drawer, loading it and putting it in his pocket, Osokin goes to see a magician he has known for some time. "He is a good magician, and always has excellent brandy and cigars." To him, Osokin glooms: if only he had known! If only it were all to do again! Could it not be? The magician says, yes, possible. But it will make no difference. Let me remember, Osokin pleads, and the magician agrees. But warns "You will remember everything, but nothing will come of it."

The magician pronounces the usual incomprehensible formulae, throws the classic-grey-green powder into the fire, and *sapristi,* Osokin is back in his school dormitory. In his sleepy mind ring words from Stevenson's "Song of the Morrow", about the King of Duntrine's daughter. Which is strange, as he doesn't know English! At first he is utterly bewildered. "I'm not really here. This place hasn't caught me again. This is all a nightmare. Then he realizes, and is glad. The magician has done his part, the memory of Zinaida is with him, only she is now before him, not behind, still his to win. And this time all will be very well: he will be ready for her.

But again he is expelled from school for a childish prank, as before; knowing now that his mother is to die shortly, he hurts her infinitely; knowing it will mean his uncle's disfavor and his own dismissal, he yet seduces his cousin. He is expelled again from military school for staying out all night with Anna Stepanovna. As before, his aunt leaves him 30,000 roubles. With them he goes to finish his education in Paris, and gambles them all away in company that cares for him as little as he for them. Love is now dichotomised: the English Valerie, whom he might marry, is too rich; and Osokin deserts Loulou, leaving the customary offering on the mantelpiece. He returns to Russia, still aware, now dimly, yet occasionally clearly, that all this has happened before, and that all his misfortunes are his own fault. At long last, the wheel comes again full circle. Osokin, penniless, is again seeing Zinaida off to the Crimea. Again, he lives through the dreary months after her departure; again receives the miserly three letters, again takes the same revolver from his table drawer, loads it and sets off to visit the magician. As he is repeating the identical same words, he stops. "God, what am I saying? I said the very same thing then." And the magician explains. Again, he can send Osokin back, fully conscious, aware. But again "it will not be of any use. It will not make things any better for you."

Osokin, realizing the pattern, the ceaseless repetition, objects that this is a trap. The magician agrees. But smiles. "The trap is called life." Yet comforts Osokin. There is a way out. But it is forward. Osokin must live. If he goes backward again, in his present state, if he kills himself, it will all be to do again, and again, then, gradually, he will run down, for people who have realized the truth of recurrence, and have not used their knowledge, "after some time cease to be born and are replaced by other people." "What must I do?" queries Osokin, echoing the words of another young man, and the same answer is given him. "Give." But I have nothing to give, objects Osokin. And the magician says, yes, your life. You were going to throw it away entirely. Instead, give me fifteen years. Osokin wavers, and as the novel ends he is contemplating the three alternatives before him "the three roads of the Russian fairy tale." And of these three, the last, to give himself to the magician seems strange, almost cowardly. "But if it is true that one actually can do nothing, then it is not cowardly at all." Well, tomorrow, thinks Osokin, and realizes that "if he were not there, everything would be exactly the same."

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style, as are the unexpected lyrical details, and the descriptions, such as the ride on White Legs, and the autumnal walk with Zinaida. The mood of sustained, romantic melancholy is as perfectly held as in an opera: the whole novel has an intensely personal flavor, as of autobiography, combined with a nostalgic mellowness, a tenderness, that is universal. The characterization is deft, and the difference in the hero's feeling for the various women is masterly: without mawkishness or coarseness, there is yet a reality about each experience and each emotion. After the thunders of Mr. Ouspensky's much earlier philosophical works, "A New Model of the Universe" and "Tertium Organum", this is a still, small voice, and one that is speaking in a surprisingly gentle and kindly tone.

Recurrence has always haunted mankind as a possibility. That Hell might be the inane, inevitable, eternal repetition of our faults, in full *connaissance de cause* has been held by not a few; that Purgatory might be a stiff dose of the same medicine, tempered by the assurance of ultimate escape, has been postulated by others. Our life may indeed be a gramophone record here and now, not in any empyrean future, inescapably replayed, unless and until by grace we find the only door out, that is also the one door in. Whether read as novel, as allegory, or as philosophy, this is both an alarming and an enchanting book.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Ordeal of the Union. By Allan Nevins. Scribner's. $10.00.

THE two fat volumes of Professor Nevins's latest contribution to history deal with what is even yet the most dramatic period in the life story of the United States. During the years between 1847 and 1857 it became evident not only that the preservation of the Union was a major issue but also that it might not be decided amicably. I suppose that no one earnestly considered war. The trouble was rather that, as the years went on, few any longer believed that a peaceful solution could be found.

Not a few writers have dealt with the drama of these critical years. What distinguishes the present account is not so much originality as perspective. It has grown singularly fashionable to believe that by concentrating on the most famous people of a period one can distil its essence. In all truth such people are only facets. Henry Clay, for example, was probably the greatest man of his time. But he was not its most representative citizen. The passions of the era found no lightning rod in him. Clay may have been the incarnation of reason. He was hardly the mouthpiece of moods and emotions in either the North or the South.

Professor Nevins is indifferent to no tide of feeling. He knows how to evaluate Abolitionists, Know-Nothings and fanatics of the Deep South. He realizes that a debate in Congress is not merely an argument but an explosion. Much of what he writes would be fascinating as political psychology even if the reader were not interested in the story as such. No historian has tried to remain as conscious of all human activities and frailties. The American is seen in his manifold social and economic relationships. He is trader, empire builder, worker, politician. The nap of the narrative is thick.

I have read a good many books about this period, because of an inherited interest in the Civil War. Nevins's transcends all others in scale. He not only hits a nail on the head, but he seems to remember the nails he missed. Nevertheless these books are in a sense troubling. One seems to see dozens of graduate students at work compiling data, and an author kneading the dough into digestible batter. There are strange lumps in the loaf. One cannot avoid the conclusion that a book of this sort should be permitted to sit in the pan for a while until all the ingredients fuse and the yeast has time to rise.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

Wings in the Wilderness. Allan D. Cruickshank. Oxford. $6.00.

IT IS a beautiful Sunday in October, so your wife packs a lunch, kisses you sadly good-bye, and armed with your field glasses and bird book (Peterson, of course), you set out for a distant beach on Staten Island that somebody said was good.

On the ferry you see some gulls, and then there is a long bus ride and a longer walk—very warm for October—and at last you come out on the beach, and there, as though they had been waiting for you, are five black-bellied plovers. Except that, being in the fall plumage, their bellies are no longer black, but white, which is confusing but not unusual in birds.

Then you see nothing notable at all for hours and hours. Finally, at the end of the afternoon you come out on the beach again, and there on a long pier, also waiting, are ten great black-backed gulls and, far out, one double-crested cormorant, black and sleek and mysterious.

So the day is a success. Three hours traveling, three hours walking and three unusual species. All of which proves that maybe you should have stayed home with a copy of "Wings in the Wilderness," which is a new collection of what are probably the 125 most magnificent bird photographs in the world, taken by Allan D. Cruickshank, who is certainly the most magnificent bird photographer in the world.

You can go further. You can say that Cruickshank is a great artist, and possibly, a genius. And whether or not you can tell a red-breasted nuthatch from a yellow-bellied sapsucker (there is such a bird), you shall enjoy "Wings in the Wilderness" if there is any feeling for beauty in you at all. If you are a photographer of any kind, this book is something you can't afford to miss. (There is an appendix, by the way, describing how each picture was taken: "Graflex, 8-inch lens, 1/110 second f8" and so on. There is also a good running commentary on the pictures by Mr. Cruickshank.)

You don't have to be a photographer, however, to realize that bird photography is about as difficult, heart-breaking a kind of photography as you can imagine. Consider the problems involved in getting close enough to a wild bird long enough to take a recognizable picture. Then consider the problems involved in getting the bird maneuvered into the right light, against the right background, as part of the right kind of composition. And then, just before you go mad, try to get a good shot of your bird in flight.

Cruickshank has met and mastered all these problems. In fact, he has pinned their shoulders to the mat. That is why you can say quite soberly that "Wings in the Wilderness" is a work of at least minor genius. Whether it be ring-billed gulls in the air, a Bonaparte's gull sitting in the middle of a perfect ripple, or the common song sparrow standing in the snow, these pictures are

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right and the birds are right. That is the way you see them when they are at their best and you are lucky enough to catch them at it.

Scouts report that there is a new show on Broadway with a screamingly funny number called "Bird-Watcher's Song." Could be. Bird-watchers can be pretty funny. And then again the song may be just another symptom of a decadent age. Birds can be funny too. But more often they are content simply to be beautiful and fascinating, reflecting in a singularly pure and simple way the ancient beauty and fascination of their Creator. So watch the bird-watchers and laugh if you will. The bird-watchers have their reward. JOHN C. CORT.

The von Hassell Diaries, 1938-1944. *Ulrich von Hassell. Doubleday.* $5.00.

AFTER READING these diaries in German last July I had no doubt about the author's character: an upright, well educated gentleman, the personification of what was good in the German nobility. I felt that of all I have read so far, including Rudolf Pechel's book, this is the most touching document concerning the generals' revolt. The translation reads well and the publishers have done their best to bring out a well made book. The material Hassell reveals is naturally in the hands of historians through the tons of evidence gathered in Nuernberg at the time of the trials. But for us average readers a great many aspects of Hitler, his generals and stooges, his plans and his opposition are revealed by a man of honor who went into the opposition because of his conscience and his decency and who, like Pechel, is horrified by the sheer indecency and brutality of the regime. It took Hassell five years to awaken and to make up his mind, but there was no faltering once he made the decision. He showed great courage and died for decency and honesty. The world and Germany would be better off if a few hundred of his calibre were still around.

One interesting item is Hassell's remark on April 8, 1941, more than two months before the invasion of Russia (p. 189): "It makes one's hair stand on end to learn about and receive proof of orders signed by Halder (Hitler's chief of staff) and distributed to the troops as to measures to be taken in Russia . . . This kind of thing turns the German into a "Boche"; it develops a type which had existed only in enemy propaganda. (Marshal) Brauchitsch (Commander in Chief) has sacrificed the honor of the German Army in submitting to these orders of Hitler." It is pleasant to see Hassell truly concerned about the feelings of the nations wronged by Germany. Hassell was a Christian gentleman, a nationalist without arrogance and harshness who suffered incredibly from the baseness and vulgarity of his countrymen. Why he was not finished off long before July 20, 1944, is approaching the miraculous. The reading of this book by all German students should be made obligatory before admitting them to any examination. H. A. REINHOLD.

The Season's Books

FOR THE FIRST time since the war a decided upturn is noticeable in the range and quality and interest of the volumes published in the general trade field. At the same time American publishers seem to be contending with greatly aggravated production costs—printing and binding as well as paper. The lists which follow

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present some of the most interesting volumes of very recent months. None of the season's handsomely illustrated art books, volumes of popular natural history or other very specialized titles are included here.

Fiction

When the Mountain Fell. C-F Ramuz. Pantheon. $2.50. This is an extremely simple tale of an arduous escape—and return home—from a mountain-climbing disaster; with great economy of phrase and incident it grows in intensity and registers great depths of feeling.

The Garretson Chronicle. Gerald Warner Brace. Norton. $3.00. A highly readable and penetrating account of a New England childhood.

Thérèse. François Mauriac. Holt. $3.00. A pitiless and yet understanding study of a woman always verging on despair; all in all, the most powerful novel on this list.

The Middle of the Journey. Lionel Trilling. Viking. $3.00. The scene and feeling of this thoughtful and perceptive novel are extremely contemporary. A remarkable interaction between a person and various ideas.

Vespers in Vienna. Bruce Marshall. Houghton. $2.75. The impact of the order and self-dedication manifest in an Austrian convent upon an unbelieving British officer who recognizes that the world is in collapse.

Greener Than You Think. Ward Moore. William Sloane. $3.50. An extremely imaginative allegorical novel in which the villain is probably current secularism.

The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin. P. D. Ouspensky. Holme. $2.75. Reviewed in this issue.

Fishers of Men. Maxence van der Meersch. Sheed. $3.00. A brilliant younger novelist turns to the Jociste (Young Christian Workers) movement and allows a courageous young Frenchman to tell his own story of discouragement, zeal, companionship and high adventure.

This publishing season is also notable for its unusually interesting volumes of short stories. The following are particularly worthy of attention.

Prince of Darkness and Other Stories. J. F. Powers. Doubleday. $2.75.
There and Then. [*of India*] *Christine Weston. Scribners.* $2.50.
The Gamecock and Other Stories. Michael McLaverty. Devin. $2.75.
Far and Near. [*China, Japan and America*] *Pearl Buck. John Day.* $2.75.
The Best Short Stories of Charles Dickens. Edited by Edwin Valentine Mitchell. Scribners. $3.50.

History

THE big history book of the year, both in sales and content, has been the "Abridgement" by D. C. Somervell of Arnold J. Toynbee's "A Study of History." (Oxford. $5.00) So rich and thoughtful a work rarely obtains the wide public which the country has surprisingly furnished this one. The first reason, most likely, is one that should make the Toynbee an excellent Christmas gift: it is enormously, overwhelmingly *interesting*. The

A SHORT CHRISTMAS LIST FROM S & W

to help you with yours. You've heard about all these books already, but may have forgotten a title here and an author there. If your bookstore hasn't got these to show, wave this ad at them and ask them **WHY NOT?** You can of course order books direct from us if you would rather, and know what they look like already.

NOVELS

THE DRY WOOD *by Caryll Houselander* $3.00
THE WOMAN WHO WAS POOR *by Leon Bloy* $3.00
VIPERS' TANGLE *by Francois Mauriac* $3.00
FISHERS OF MEN *by Maxence van der Meersch* $3.00

BIOGRAPHIES

HORACE *by Alfred Noyes* $3.50
BOCCACCIO *by Francis MacManus* $3.50

CRITICISM

THE COURSE OF IRISH VERSE *by Robert Farren* $2.50
PARADOX IN CHESTERTON *by Hugh Kenner* $2.00

BEST SELLERS

THE NEW TESTAMENT * *translated by Msgr. Ronald Knox, GIFT EDITION* $5.00
THE PSALMS * *translated by Ronald Knox* $2.00
PARDON AND PEACE *by Alfred Wilson, C.P.* $2.50

CHILDREN

POLISH FOLK TALES *translated by Lucia M. Borski, illustrated in color* $2.00
CAT ROYAL *by Charles Brady, illus. in color* $2.00
ST. IMAGINUS *by Frances M. McGuire, illus.* $1.50
THE WOLF *by Mary Harris, illus.* $1.50
(All for ages 8 to 12)
GOSPEL RHYMES *by Various Authors, illus.* $1.50
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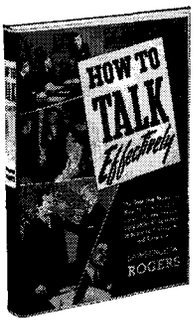

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grand manner of the study, the excellent writing, the weighty and persuasive intellectual ideas, and the catholic awareness should make a giver quite confident that he is doing a good thing, as well as a highly acceptable one, in introducing a friend to this history.

The last war is gradually getting into history books, where one would wish it seemed to be more securely settled. We don't yet have a long enough view to decide which of the recent volumes about it are most worthy, nor, ever, which would best fit your friend or relation's own experiences and tastes. The official "Battle of the Atlantic," by Samuel Eliot Morison, which is the first volume of "The History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II" (Little Brown. $6.00.) is a remarkably good book for a government to publish and will satisfy many kinds of taste.

Two certain source books for any future history are recently available: "Admiral Halsey's Story," written by William F. Halsey and Joseph Bryan III (McGraw. $4.00) is the first-hand account of the war's most colorful seaman, and the man who is, in many important statistical ways, the most victorious fighter the ocean has ever seen. A still more remarkable book is "War as I Knew It," by General George S. Patton, Jr. (Houghton. $3.75). So far, we are sure, this personal account has not been recognized as the astonishing document it really is, so the giftee has probably not got it. Patton is a major fact in this past war, the most effective and feared battle commander in any army anywhere in the world. Indeed, Patton viewed himself and the Third Army, not against the contemporary background primarily, but rather against the ageless history of war itself and the conquerors from folk legend on. "I can say this, that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a Combat Command to take Hammelburg. Otherwise, my operations were, to me, strictly satisfactory." A general who can and does say this, and makes an extraordinarily strong case (without deigning to "make a case") in doing so, is a phenomenon to meet, especially in this gray, bureaucratic age—whether you believe in battle fatigue or not.

There are two particularly large scale works in American history on the shelves this season. Mr. Shuster reviews this week somewhere in this issue Allan Nevin's "Ordeal of the Union" (Scribner's. $10.00). "The Shaping of the American Tradition," gathered and presented and edited by Louis M. Hacker and Helene S. Zahler (Columbia. $7.50: 2 vol.) is another work of great dimensions, which would also be of great interest to certain people. An excellent omnibus-type chronicle of the Civil War is "American Iliad," by Otto Eisenschiml and Ralph Newman (Bobbs. $5.00), which tells the story of the conflict through the narratives of many direct observers.

The very learned and civilized historian of our colonial period, Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, has added to his works this year, "The Puritan Oligarchy" (Scribner's. $5.00). "New Letters of Abigail Adams: 1788-1801," edited by Stewart Mitchell (Houghton. $5.00) is a good present for the interested person. "The Proper Bostonians," by Cleveland Amory (Dutton. $4.50) deals ably with a less reverential time and phase of a great tradition.

By here, we are getting into rather specialized historical interests. "California in Our Time," by Robert

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Glass Cleland (Knopf. $4.00) is capable and attractive about that. "Silver Kings," by Oscar Lewis (Knopf. $4.00) comes east to Nevada, etc., tracing the work of the miners who hit it rich. Bernard De Voto's "Across the Wide Missouri" (Houghton. $10.00) is a most handsome and very well composed history of the fur men who spanned the plains and mountains. This would also be a natural place to recall again this year the various series like "Trails," "Rivers," "Folkways," etc. and the numerous books on particular cities which various publishers have been producing in a coverage which is by now practically continental. Most of these are good as history as well as localized geography.

"Country Life in America—as Lived by Ten Presidents of the United States," by Edward Townsend Booth (Knopf. $3.75) warrants a special paragraph.

Politics

AMONG the leading current volumes on a wide range of political subjects—national and international:

The Missouri Valley. Rufus Terral. Yale. $3.75.
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Confessions of a Congressman. Jerry Voorhis. Doubleday. $3.50.
Now in Mexico. Hudson Strode. Harcourt. $5.00.
Last Chance in China. Freda Utley. Bobbs. $3.50.
Germany—Bridge or Battleground. James P. Warburg. Harcourt. $3.00.
Hungary—The Unwilling Satellite. John Flournoy Montgomery. Devin. $3.00.
Russia's Europe. Hal Lehrman. Appleton. $3.75.
Forced Labor in Soviet Russia. David Dallin and Boris J. Nicolaevsky. Yale. $3.75.
The Cold War. Walter Lippmann. Harper. $1.00.
Speaking Frankly. James F. Byrnes. Harper. $3.50.

Dissimilar

THESE two books are together because in these times it is perhaps not entirely proper to be moved, or amused, by the characters of a nineteenth century novelist unless one also is moved, and not amused, by real characters who lived in a world that the war has destroyed. So here are the "Polish Jews: A Pictorial Record. Photographs by Roman Vishniak. Introductory Essay by Abraham Joshua Heschel." (Schocken, $3.75.) And here are the characters in "Martin Chuzzlewit." Charles Dickens. Illustrated by Mary Petty. (Knopf. $7.50.) Vishniak's photographs were taken before the terror came; they are extraordinary and beautiful. Mary Petty's great talent here is controlled, poetic, and her Dickens characters are seen in the distance of that lost world with tenderness.

Dissimilar II

ALFRED NOYES and W. H. Auden. Here too is a world, the way people thought in a world that is gone, and another world and the way people now have to think—clearly, sourly, if you want. The sweetness in Noyes (noise) many will think an eternal element in poetry; the sharp, clear and permanent anxiety in Auden is the inevitable note of the present. "Collected Poems." Alfred Noyes. (Lippincott, $5.00.) "The Age of Anxiety." W. H. Auden. (Random. $2.50.)

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Writers

Boccaccio. Francis MacManus. Sheed. $3.50. Here is an Irishman who is not afraid to write about this Italian whose reputation for naughtiness is greatly overemphasized and whose interest as a poet is as greatly neglected. The author successfully recreates the society in which lived Boccaccio and does so with suavity and sensitiveness.

Portrait of Edith Wharton. Percy Lubbock. Appleton. $3.00. Mrs. Wharton appears as someone with whom one would certainly not desire to travel—and for whose company everyone fought. Mr. Lubbock admires her beyond belief. His delicacy in treating some of the problems which he himself suggests is occasionally aggravating in the extreme. But here was a lady of boundless vitality, certain talent, and undeniable charm. And this portrait has equally undeniable interest.

Andre Gide. Journals. Volume 1. 1889-1913. Knopf. $5.00. Gide has led many young men to despair, some to suicide; he has freed many intelligences; he has exposed himself to every danger, even to that of being overwhelmed by grace—and he has remained the spectator of his own fluctuations, recording them in these amazing diaries. When "The Counterfeiters" is no longer read, *"Si le grain ne meurt"* will be read—as a tender and lucid account of a French childhood in the 1880's, rather than as dubious self-justification—but the "Journals" will be read as long as anyone is interested in writing.

Péguy, and the Cahiers de la Quinzaine. Daniel Halévy. Longmans. $3.50. Halévy is peculiarly well qualified to write about this great Frenchman and his period. Socialism meant something in those days and Péguy was the first to worry about its deviations. Many most interesting details about his method of work and the origins of the great poetry and thinking which we continue to appreciate for its enduring and contemporary interest.

Arthur Rimbaud. Enid Starkie. Norton. $5.00. This is the most complete treatment in English, and also in French, of the poet whose influence on all poetry, since he stopped writing when still a young man, has been so persistent and deep. For the first time we see the poet's parents in detail and the heavy burden of inheritance they brought to Rimbaud. A remarkable achievement.

The Times of Melville and Whitman. Van Wyck Brooks. Dutton. $5.00. Reviewed in this issue.

The Hooded Hawk. D. B. Wyndham Lewis. Longmans. $4.00. An excellent study of Boswell who was so much less of a fool than some people have thought and whose snobbishness served (as did Proust's) higher ends. His avid curiosity and his amazing ability as a reporter are here examined. An extraordinary and interesting character. His work is now available in "The Portable Johnson and Boswell" edited by Louis Kronenberger (Viking, $2.00). This portable series, the nearest American approach to the pre-war excellency of the Pléiade French editions, with excellent paper and typography, continues to provide useful and excellent texts. We note: the "Portable Russian Reader," edited by Bernard Gilbert Gurney, and the "Portable Conrad," edited by Morton Dauwen Zabel (Viking, $2.00 each).

The Trollope Reader. Edited by Esther Cloudman Dunn

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and Marion E. Dodd. Oxford, $3.75. Trollope's vogue continues and the more one reads him the more one realizes that it is not just a trick of literary fashion. Here is an excellent selection from his work.

The James Family. F. O. Matthiessen. Knopf. $6.75. The Notebooks of Henry James. Edited by F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth D. Murdoch. Oxford. $6.00. If the Trollope vogue continues, that of Henry James, William James, Father James and Sister James is just as flourishing. These two books will keep people busy until the next ones are published. There is no denying the extreme interest of this prodigious American family, nor the competence and interest of their treatment by Mr. Matthiessen. The Notebooks, of course, give an otherwise unattainable view of Henry James's process of preparing his literary creations. Writing was as serious a matter for him as philosophy was for his brother. It is wonderful to see how conscientious a man must be before he can create anything serious.

The Sherwood Anderson Reader. Edited with an introduction by Paul Rosenfeld. Houghton. $5.00. We are listing these books haphazardly because that is the way extraordinarily diversified talent appears in the world of letters. No one could be more unlike Henry James than Sherwood Anderson. Paul Rosenfeld knew him well and his posthumous preface is extremely able and sensitive. Anderson invites re-reading.

Makers of Modern Literature. New Directions. $2.00 each.
Oscar Wilde, by Edouard Roditi
Robert Louis Stevenson, by David Daiches
Andre Gide, by Van Meter Ames
Thomas Wolfe, by Herbert J. Muller

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The American Imagination at Work: Tall Tales and Folk Tales. Edited by Ben C. Clough. Knopf. $6.00. The dispute as to whether America has produced a special brand of humor, invention and imagination can only be settled subjectively. Here are the texts on which a judgment can be made. A great many people will enjoy them, and those who do not enjoy them need only look at the title and pass on.

Criticism, Etc.

Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose. Leo Stein. Crown. $2.50. Gertrude Stein's brother disagreed with her on many subjects and wrote a completely intelligible English. He lived abroad, looking at paintings, talking with and to painters, and his theory on the arts is stimulating, intelligent and not too systematic. He mixes his memoirs with his teaching and the result is a curious book which a certain number of people interested in esthetics will find a delightful exception to other writing

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Man Into Beast: Strange Tales of Transformation. Edited by A. C. Spectorsky. Doubleday. $3.75. These indeed strange tales are not as one might expect all lugubrious. They include the story of the fish who became an American Naval lieutenant, which is a most unusual invention.

Great Morning. Sir Osbert Sitwell. Little. $4.00. This is the latest volume in Sitwell's series of memoirs. No one has reconstructed so successfully the literary and social life of an England that is now so changed. The ramifications of the Sitwell family continue to spread and the author continues to advance, calmly, wittily through his memories. Of absorbing interest.

Paris Herald. Al Laney. Appleton, $3.00. Here we leave the great writers and the English gentlemen and the critics and enter the world of the newspapermen who ran Gordon Bennett's Paris newspaper. Mr. Laney remembers it all and anyone who has ever been abroad will remember the newspaper he talks about and will be delighted to read its most unusual and highly amusing story. This is a nostalgic book and there won't be another Paris Herald for a long time.

A Treasury of Mexican Folkways. Frances Torr. Crown. $5.00. A handsome book and a nice present.

Biography

VOLUMES of biography and autobiography seem less popular with American publishers than they were during the war for some reason. They often constitute handsome gifts. Several of the most interesting titles which could have been treated in this category are, because of special literary, historical or religious qualities, discussed under other categories on this list. A number of the most absorbing current biographies have to do with American history. On the nineteenth century there are two volumes of particular note. "Horace Greeley and the Republican Party," by Jeter Allen Isely (Princeton, $4.50), is not a full-length biography but rather a study of the man during the brief period in the mid-nineteenth century when he had his greatest political influence and achieved his success in forming a new political group to oppose the then-reigning Democratic Party. "Forgotten First Citizen—John Bigelow," by Margaret Clapp (Little, $4.00), was the man who virtually managed Tilden's all but successful campaign for the Presidency. He, too, was a newspaperman and served as the guiding spirit of William Cullen Bryant's *Post*. Somewhat heavy going and overly personal in his presentation of the

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growth of American forestry is "Breaking New Ground," by Gifford Pinchot (Harcourt, $5.00). This professional rather than intimate autobiography has its moments for those properly concerned with conservation of national resources and American forests or with the national politics of the turn of the century. "F. D. R.," edited by Elliott Roosevelt (Duell, $5.00), is a generous collection of the personal letters of Franklin Roosevelt from early childhood up through his twenty-fourth year.

A poor boy's struggle for an education is the dominant theme of "A Cornish Childhood," by A. L. Rowse (Macmillan, $4.00). An attractive bit of autobiography is "A Roving Recluse," by Peter F. Anson (Newman, $3.00). It is the tale of a sensitive, Christian seafaring-man who touches on a number of Europe's troubled places in the course of his current voyages. The book is illustrated with his own black-and-white drawings in a style similar to the one which accompanied an article of his in THE COMMONWEAL a few years back. "Frederick the Great," by G. P. Gooch (Knopf, $5.00), is the work of one of England's most distinguished contemporary historians. This is not so much a personal study as a presentation of his eighteenth-century Europe and even more an analysis of the qualities which made the founder of modern Prussia so successful a power-politician. "Cervantes," by Aubrey Bell (Oklahoma, $3.00) is a happy commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of the too little read author of Don Quixote. One of the most moving volumes of this season is "Green Memories," by Lewis Mumford (Harcourt, $3.50), a father's tribute to a son killed in action at the age of nineteen. "Modern Christian Revolutionaries," edited by Donald Attwater (Devin, $4.00) comprises 5 good short sketches.

Religion

THE MOST personal book to give for Christmas is a "religious" book; and when the conjunction is right between the giver and the book and the one who receives, it is the best. But least of all is it possible to *classify* what would be the best religious book for you to give a person; it is a problem of your superior tact. These following books, however, are in themselves good religious and philosophic works either new or in new and valuable rendition, which critics over recent months have pointed out as *very likely*:

The Complete Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas—in English. Benziger. 3 *Vols.* $38.00.
The Christ of Catholicism. Dom Aelred Graham. Longmans. $4.00
The Christian Churches of the East. Vol. 1. *Donald Attwater. Bruce.* $4.00.
The Book of Saints. Compiled by the Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate. Macmillan. $6.00.
I Sing of a Maiden. Edited by Sister M. Therese. Macmillan. $4.50.
A Catholic Reader. Edited by Charles A. Brady. Desmond. $3.50.
Community of the Free. Yves R. Simon. Holt. $3.00.
Behold This Heart. H. J. Heagney. Kenedy, $3.50.
The Person and the Common Good. Jacques Maritain. Scribner's. $1.50.
France Alive. Claire Huchet Bishop. McMullen, $3.00.

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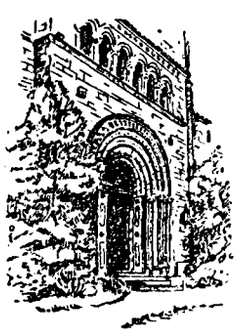

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The Works of John Henry Newman. Edited by Charles Frederick Harrold. (appearing before Christmas: Apologia Pro Vita Sua, A Grammar of Assent, The Idea of a University.) Longmans. $3.50, *each of these three volumes.*

More Children's Books

(Continued from Nov. 21)

From Msgr. Sheen's "Jesus, Son of Mary." Illustrated by Raffaello Busoni. (McMullen.)

Merry Christmas. Illustrated by Natasha Simkovitch. (Knopf. $2.00.)
The Christmas Book. Illustrated by Corinne Malvern. Compiled by Gertrude Crampton. (S. & S. $1.50.)
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All of these are indubitably gift books, the first two like a flock of Christmas cards and tales and songs and

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